

TRIUMPH OF AMERICAN WOOL

NEW SCOURING PROCESS WHICH BIDS FAIR TO REVOLUTIONIZE PRICES.

600,000 POUNDS OF OIL AS A BY-PRODUCT—WHAT THE WOOL MEN SAY.

When the new New-York Wool Exchange opens, in May, it will open to considerable purpose. Thanks to the ingenuity of Ernest Fabrik, a German chemist and engineer, and William T. Cutter, State Chemist of Connecticut, American wool now promises to bring from 2 to 10 cents a pound more than heretofore. When it is realized that nearly 500,000 pounds of wool have been consumed in the United States in the year 1894, the difference is considerable.

The variation in price will be due to simply one thing—washing. American wool has been soiled, and in many cases better, than foreign wool, but Old World cleaning methods have been superior, with the result that foreign wool has commanded a better price from those manufacturers who require a superior staple.

Now, however, there is a new process for believing that the tables are turned. The Empire Wool Cleaning Company, a New-Jersey corporation, controlling the Cutter and Fabrik patents and processes, is in a position to turn out a better American wool than the best foreign wool at no increased cost. About 20 per cent of uncleaned wool is wool-oil, whereas the old alkali process gets out nothing. Thus a gain to the National wealth may be effected to the extent of some millions of pounds annually of pure animal oil, valuable as a base for ointments, soap and other preparations, now being sold for 90 cents a pound.

These are stupendous figures, but they appear to be fully justified by the facts and supported by competent and authoritative testimony.

Yesterday the Board of Directors of the Empire Wool Cleaning Company decided to take steps to construct another plant on New-York Bay, in a position to produce and facilitate the shipping of wool to be destined to them.

Charles H. Briggs, general manager of the Empire Wool Cleaning Company, was seen yesterday and confirmed the news.

"We intend to work the capacity of our plant at Pompton Lakes night and day," said Mr. Briggs, "but we realize that a new plant on the water front will soon be imperatively necessary. As it is, we put ourselves in position to meet demand. I do not care to say anything about the value of our process. It must speak for itself. It is already fairly well known to those who are connected with the wool industry. At some later time I may be prepared to say something upon this subject for good."

Mr. Allan Macnaughton, treasurer of the New-York Wool Warehouse Company and president of the Macnaughton Company, one of the largest wool corporations in the United States, told The Tribune man that he had been watching the development of the new scouring process with the keenest interest.

"I want to say to The Tribune," said Mr. Macnaughton, "that a vast economic question is involved in this matter of cleaning wool. I believe I do not exaggerate when I say that it bids fair to revolutionize the whole wool industry. To understand the problems involved you must realize that the wool of commerce is not wool only; it is largely grease. Before it can be used by the looms it must be cleaned. Now, here is just where American wool has long been at a disadvantage. In this country the green wool is cleaned by an alkali or soda process, which leaves the wool in not such good, but, all things equal, in a better condition than foreign wool. I will show you some of this new American wool, for it is in a new sense."

Mr. Macnaughton here produced a tin case of wool cleaned by the hydro-carbon process, and another sample cleaned by the old process.

"Now," said Mr. Macnaughton, "you see the difference at once. This new process will give a softer, finer, fluffier wool than anything from the best English mills. The old process fibre is comparatively dark, harsh and wiry."

"When you realize that the new process fibre will bring to the wool-grower from 2 to 10 cents a pound more, according to the sort, the figures fairly take one's breath away, for the wool of the American wool has usually been the half-billion point."

"What will be the practical outcome of the new process?"

"Why, just this," answered Mr. Macnaughton; "the manufacturer will get a better wool within American territory than he can ever expect to get abroad, and the wool-grower will get higher prices."

"But isn't the process expensive?"

"On the contrary," said Mr. Macnaughton, "with a grim smile, 'it is infinitely less expensive. The Empire Wool Cleaning Company are charging a cent a pound, but, of course, they can afford to do it for nothing.'"

"Why?"

"For the simple reason that they extract all the oil from the wool, and use the product which is entirely free from any irritating substances, and which sells on the market for 60 cents a pound, with only the cost of refining and marketing the product as a deduction."

"The new Wool Exchange will open in the spring, and with proper sorting the new-process wool ought to quickly vindicate itself. I cannot see how the old scouring plants can compete, either in quality or price."

Mr. J. H. Benson, No. 101 Read-st., has had twenty years' experience in the scouring of wool. "I have had my wool scoured by the new process," said he. "It leaves the wool white and soft, and in a better condition to take dyes, and it works up softer and smoother and better in every way. Even foreign wool contains quite a percentage of grease after scouring. The new process removes all the grease."

Mr. George Follett, No. 150 Duane-st., says: "Although the alkali process is still in general use, it cannot compare with the new method. There is no kind of wool which this hydro-carbon process will not scour completely and fully, and after cleaning, the wool is equal, if not superior, to the best wool from foreign sources."

Mr. Brandt, of the Brandt Wool Company, No. 280 Fifth-st., Jersey City, says: "Undoubtedly the new process is an epoch-making invention. Caustic soda injures the wool, which is after all nothing but gelatine, whereas the hydro-carbon not only does not injure the fibre, but leaves it in better condition for dyeing and working up."

Mr. Hammond, head of the cassimere department of H. R. Clavin & Co., says: "There is no question that foreign fine cassimeres are superior to the American ones only because the wool is thoroughly scoured. Naturally, because of its superiority, it brings a higher price—a price which is more or less fixed by the interest on the wool while stored. In this country the wool is scoured by the alkali process, and upon the market just like green leather or green lumber. If American wool can be delivered as clean as the manufacturer's, it will command a very much larger price, both from the manufacturer and the trader."

Mr. J. H. Macdonald, representative of the Harris Woolen Company, No. 88 Worth-st., spoke of the big fight against foreign competition, and was of the opinion that the new process would tell the tale. "The new process to improve American wool is a valuable weapon, indeed, just at this time," said Mr. Macdonald.

Mr. Charles Roblee, treasurer of the Wool Oil Refining Company, No. 131 Liberty, explained the use of his company to the Empire Wool Cleaning Company.

"We are refiners merely," said Mr. Roblee. "We clean the wool by the oil process, which is sold to the drug trade as a base for ointments. We have also succeeded in completely satisfying the demand for the wool as a base for ointments, and for the manufacture of soap and other preparations. As a hoof dressing for horses, as a belt dressing for power plants, as a nutrient and curative for the skin, the wool oil is a valuable product. What do you calculate the world's supply of wool oil by the new process to be?" asked The Tribune man.

"Well, there are about 500,000 pounds of wool consumed annually in this country alone, and the wool is being used for estimates that fully 20 per cent of this is wool-oil, which would make 100,000 pounds of wool-oil in this country annually."

With a view of ascertaining the possible value of the new oil output, The Tribune man called upon Dr. Loomis said: "Wool oil is an antiseptic, first used in Vienna, some time ago. It is a new product, and it is so valuable that, for the first time, the wool is concerned. It is extensively used, though

higher priced than vaseline, as it is more valuable as a base for ointments. Like cocoa-butter, it is valuable for rubbing and softening the skin. Dr. Loomis, however, practically uses it for the same effect. "Wool oil is largely used in medical practice, especially for diseases of the skin, because it is easily absorbed. Its extract has been found to be a hydro-carbon is so very simple that I am surprised that it has not been used all along, but it is now its use as a cosmetic is becoming popular, owing to the loss of the extracting fluid by distillation."

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